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ABSTRACT

This report lists and explains detailed guidelines for the preparation and transmittal of student transcripts by secondary schools. The guidelines were established by the Cooperative for School/College Communication Studies, a group composed of representatives of eight professional organizations representing college admissions officers, community and junior colleges, and secondary school administrators and guidance counselors. The guidelines are intended to lessen the problems caused by diversity in the kinds of information contained in transcripts, the form and sequence of transcript information, the physical structure of transcripts, and the form and definition of terms commonly used in transcripts. The guidelines identify five categories of information that should be included in all transcripts: student identification, school identification, general school information, student's academic history, and student's personal characteristics. Separate sections discuss each of these categories in detail, and recommendations are made for the reproduction, organization, and preparation of transcript materials for submission to college and junior college admissions offices. (JG)

Research
Ideas
Practice

CURRICULUM **Report**

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Guidelines* for

School-to-College Transcript Content

Part I: Background and Introduction

Many secondary schools are finding that, because of changes in their instructional programs and in their ways of reporting and recording student progress, many long-established school-to-college communication practices and instruments are no longer satisfactory. Colleges and universities are also having second thoughts about the worth of some information they have been asking schools to provide. The situation is further complicated by the use of the photocopier, the computer, and other technology to prepare transcript documents whose design largely predates the development of these devices. The result is a condition which is frequently referred to as the "transcript problem."

The most evident as well as the most bothersome feature of this transcript problem is diversity; diversity in:

- kinds of information asked for by colleges or submitted by high schools;
- the form and sequence in which such information is requested or presented;
- the physical structure in which such information is requested or presented;
- the form and definition of terms.

A Matter of Definition

As used in the present context, school-to-college transcript is considered to be whatever papers or documents a high school prepares and sends to a college or other post-secondary educational institution in connection with a student's application for admission to that institution. This, admittedly, is a more inclusive definition of "transcript" than is often used, especially by colleges, where it refers primarily to the academic record. But at least from the secondary school point of view, the "transcript problem" includes many issues in addition to the academic record, and these issues are by no means independent. This is especially evident in the case of schools that are turning to so-called non-traditional transcript patterns. The questions to which the Guidelines address themselves are:

*As proposed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the other member associations in the Cooperative for School/College Communication Studies.

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The efforts of high schools to find transcript content and processes that fit their local philosophy and conditions are understandable. The feeling of need for individuality on the part of many colleges and universities in their application materials and procedures is also understandable. Nonetheless, substantial numbers of both schools and colleges now believe this diversification has been carried to the point where neither principle nor function is well served.

Accordingly, eight professional associations whose members are, in one way or another, involved in the application/admissions process joined forces to see how this diversity might be brought under some control, thereby promoting easier and more effective communication while also promoting the essential qualities inherent in diversity. The eight members of the Cooperative are: American Association of Community Junior Colleges (represented by the National Council of Independent Junior Colleges), American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, American Personnel and Guidance Association, American School Counselor Association, National Association of College Admissions Counselors, National Association of Independent Schools, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Catholic Educational Association. This Cooperative for School/College Communication Studies selected as its first task specifying what the scope of ANY transcript ought to be, no matter its form or the processes by which it is prepared. The Guidelines presented here are the result.

The Cooperative's Steering Committee gathered data about current transcript practices from both secondary school and collegiate personnel, and is proposing recommendations based on that information and professional interpretation of it. The initial draft of the proposed Guidelines was subjected to critical evaluation by individuals and groups representing the cooperating associations; these critiques as well as later thinking by the Steering Committee are reflected in this revised version.

Three conditions should be kept in mind when these Guidelines are considered for possible application in an institution.

(1) Although agreement by all parties was hoped for--and actually was achieved with respect to most of the Guidelines here listed--in those instances where the critics were not of one mind, the Steering Committee made decisions based on a consensus of its members' best professional judgments.

(2) While their development has been a joint enterprise, acceptance and endorsement of these Guidelines is at the option of the cooperating associations, and of any other groups that approve them. The Guidelines will have little value unless they are widely accepted and applied by the educational community.

(3) Comments have been made about most of the items listed to clarify or explain or support them, but it is to be noted that, in a strict sense, the recommended Guidelines consist only of the items or topics proposed for inclusion in any school-to-college transcript.

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(1) What kinds of information, academic and otherwise, do colleges need from secondary schools to assist them in making admissions decisions?

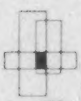
(2) What kinds of information, academic and otherwise, can and ought secondary schools provide colleges on behalf of their students who are applying for admission?

To answer these questions it is necessary to consider much more than just the academic record. "Transcript" is the word that is used in these pages to identify this range of information.

Plan of Presentation

The topics that are recommended for inclusion in all school-to-college transcripts have been assembled in five categories; namely, (a) Student Identification, (b) School Identification, (c) General School Information, (d) Student's Academic History, and (e) Student's Personal Characteristics.

In addition, a number of generalizations that were applied in developing these groups of topics deserve equal attention by schools and colleges as they revise their transcript materials and processes. The presentation of the Guidelines, therefore, begins with a discussion of these governing generalizations followed by the topics proposed for inclusion in each of the five classifications above. The report concludes with observations about a limited number of matters which, in the judgment of the drafting group, merited comment even though they were not reduced to Guideline form.



Part II: The Guidelines Detailed

GOVERNING GENERALIZATIONS

[1] The topics recommended are those that are desirable for inclusion in transcripts of all types, whether they be traditional or non-traditional in form. This was stated at an earlier point in this report, but it may need reiteration to make clear the intention to be of service not only to schools and colleges that are, for the most part, following established ways but also schools and colleges that are working with alternative educational patterns and materials. The matter of transcript form is by no means unimportant. The present report, however, concerns itself primarily with content rather than form for the reason that here, as in so many other situations, function is basic to form.

[2] The primary function of the school-to-college transcript is to assist a college in making a decision about an application for admission, even though the transcript and other application materials frequently are used by colleges for counseling purposes once the student has enrolled. The transcript-content topics recommended in the following sections of these Guidelines were selected with this function in mind, though admittedly the distinction between admissions and counseling uses is not always a distinct one; what for one institution may be information needed only for advisory purposes may for another be related closely to admissions matters. Nonetheless, the emphasis here is on information considered essential for admissions purposes.

[3] It is not true, as a great many secondary schools seem to believe, that the more information a school provides about a student the better his or her chances are for favorable action by an admissions committee. Testimony from collegiate sources makes it clear that a more limited but carefully selected set of data that bear directly on admission provides far better and more persuasive communication, and

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especially if thoughtfully arranged and well documented, than does the affluent approach to transcript design that is often encountered.

[4] Except for student identification data, a school-prepared transcript need not include information the student can be expected to provide with adequate accuracy and completeness.

[5] Nevertheless, some duplication is necessary for at least two reasons: (a) to provide the college with data for verifying certain information submitted by the student himself, and (b) to provide the college with a base for collecting the materials it assembles about an applicant.

CONTENT GUIDELINES: STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

[6a] Student's full legal name (both married and unmarried names if female and married). It is not unusual for students to be known by names other than those formally given them, and these "common names" many times work their way into school records and into correspondence about students. The "full legal name" is the one that should be used on the transcript.

The need for both single and married names in the case of married women is evident, since in the case of such applicants documents under both names are likely to be submitted to a college admissions office.

[6b] Student's common name if substantially different from the legal one. Where this is the case, the college office needs to know both names for the reason given above, and the secondary school is probably the best source of both.

[6c] Sex. Although the male/female distinction no longer has all the implications it once had, it still has some influence on institutional practice; for example, in making residence hall assignments.

[7] Birthdate. A student's date of birth is essential information, and it should be accurately recorded and reported. As for the student's place of birth, this is seldom a significant factor in making an admissions decision, so its inclusion on the transcript is not suggested, for where it is relevant to the decision the student can provide the desired information.

[8] Name(s) and address(es) of parent(s) and/or name and address of legal guardian, if other than parent. The word "legal" in the phrase "legal guardian" is especially to be noted for the reason that often a young person who is not living with his or her parent will speak of the adult who is providing the home as "my guardian" even though this is true in an affectionate but not a legal sense.

[9] Student's social security number. The social security number helps to minimize errors in the assembling of application materials and verifying information obtained from other than school sources. Duplication of names, even most unusual ones, is frequently encountered by college admissions officers, and social security numbers provide a dependable means for determining which documents belong to whom.

Nevertheless, many people in schools and colleges question the right or the propriety of a school's transmitting this information to others. Yet the usefulness of the number in the application/admissions process is indisputable. Consequently, the suggestion is made here to include it on transcripts, but with the following provisions:

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(a) If the school includes the student's social security number in his or her permanent record, presumably with the student's knowledge and consent.

(b) If students have been properly informed that requests to forward transcripts imply permission to include social security number.

A student's request that the social security number be omitted from his or her transcript should be honored inasmuch as a college can make a direct request to the applicant for the number if for any reason knowing it seems unmistakably essential.

CONTENT GUIDELINES: SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION

[10] Full school name, full school address (street, state, zip code), and telephone number (including area code). The need for these may seem so obvious as not to require comment, but at least the matter of full school address deserves emphasis. College admissions officers receive a surprisingly large number of transcript forms and related documents which contain incomplete school address information.

The school's full name and complete address ought also to be on any supplementary materials that are submitted to a college in the course of the application process. This is especially applicable to schools that are employing non-traditional transcript instruments, but schools that employ more usual materials were developed originally for local uses, in which case names and addresses were not necessary. But when these papers become part of a collection of papers and are sent out of town, the need for help in getting a sheet of paper back into its proper folder or pile is evident.

[11] School accreditation information. In most cases this involves naming the regional accrediting agency by which the school has been approved (and if short of approval, its current status). In other cases approval has been granted by a state educational agency. In still other cases, the accrediting has been done by a some less well known but most reputable accrediting organization.

[12] School's CEEB and ACT code numbers.

[13] Name, title, and phone number of staff member or members who have legal and final responsibility and authority for validating and releasing the transcript. This will often be the principal, but it may also be a counselor or some other staff member. It is recommended that, especially in large schools where the official signature is likely to be affixed to a transcript by a rubber stamp, an embossing seal be also used.

[14] Name of principal. The principal may be the person specified in Guideline 13, but in many schools he or she has little to do in any direct fashion with application-to-college activities. But since occasions will arise when a college admissions officer will want to make a first contact with the school's chief administrator, it will speed communication if the principal's name is readily available at the college office.

CONTENT GUIDELINES: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Introductory note. College admissions officers need some information about an applicant's school as background for interpreting the applicant's record. A number of secondary schools (about one in three) prepare annual fact sheets,

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usually referred to as school profiles, which they include among transcript materials. College personnel are not as enthusiastic about many of these profiles as one might expect, partly because they are so varied in content and form that using them can take more time than they are worth, and also because they tend to include a lot of information not particularly useful for admissions purposes. The profile-type items which follow in this section are those that were judged to be most useful to admissions officers for interpretive uses.

It is suggested that all schools prepare a separate document to be included in each student's transcript packet that will discuss these topics adequately but succinctly. There are several reasons for the "separate document" recommendation:

--Much of this school information will need to be updated annually, which is more conveniently done if it is on a separate document;

--The information will be useful to the college mainly at the decision-making stage; it will be advantageous to the college office to be able to discard no longer needed materials once a decision has been made; and

--Experience has shown that the little boxes that most published transcript forms provide for giving such information are insufficient and might better be allocated to other uses.

[15] Brief description of school's system of symbols or other means for reporting pupils' academic progress. For a majority of schools, this means a description of their marking systems. Nevertheless, the more inclusive phrase, "reporting pupil progress," is used here because a great many secondary schools are now using or are considering using quite different and non-traditional reporting practices and language, and the interest of the college is in whatever the pattern and symbols may be that a school employs to record and report the academic progress or status of its students. At the same time, for lack of any other simple and generally understood umbrella term, the word "marks" is used at some points in the following discussion, but in this context it should be interpreted to mean any and all pupil-progress reporting plans.

Since a school's marking system is intended primarily to inform students, their parents, and other school personnel--that is, for local educational communication purposes--some aspects of that system are likely to have little meaning in a college admission context. Hence, this Guideline calls for a selection of those details of the marking or pupil progress reporting system that a college will find most helpful in evaluating or interpreting pupil progress reports from that high school.

[16] Frequency distributions of marks or other symbols for particular groups of students or other kinds of information that will assist a college in determining the meaning of an applicant's academic record for admissions purposes. How many students in an applicant's class obtain various marks at, say, the end of the 11th grade won't, by itself, answer fully the common question, "But what does a B (or a 72 or a Low Pass or Adequate Mastery) mean from that school?" but distributions of that kind can at least provide a college with the basis for making some cautious inferences about the meaning of the marks or other evidence that appear in his or her record. What specific distributions or comparable statistics to use is a matter for each school to determine, keeping in mind the reason for working up the statistics and, of course, the restrictions that the local pupil progress reporting system may impose.

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[17] Brief description of method used to compute grade-point average and/or rank-in-class if either one is entered in the transcript. It is evident that most colleges no longer consider rank-in-class the indispensable admissions statistic it was once considered to be, though many of them make use of the figure if it is provided. A considerable number of secondary schools have discontinued computing class rank, and many others are computing and reporting rank in a more approximate form than previously--in percentiles, for instance--or are prepared to provide, at most, a student's grade-point average. Hence, the phrase "if available" in this Guideline is emphasized.

From survey data it is clear that colleges are not interested in knowing every detail of a school's methods for computing GPA or RiC. But as with marks themselves, some information is essential for interpretation purposes. For instance, what courses, if any, are excluded from the computation? What school years or semesters or other time units are covered? What is done about any courses marked on a P/F or similar basis if the system is basically an alphabetic or numeric one? What, if anything, is done about differential weighting in figuring GPA? And in the case of RiC, what student groups are included in or excluded from the ranking?

[18] Size of applicant's class. Many colleges now ask for the size of the applicant's graduating class and the figure is common knowledge in every school. Hence, it can readily be reported on a transcript.

[19] Graduation requirements in terms of credits and time patterns. For more than half a century, information about graduation requirements was readily supplied by most high schools in terms of so many Carnegie units. While a majority of secondary schools still define their graduation requirements in this manner, other ways of defining them are emerging. An explanation is especially important in the case of schools that have broken in a significant way with the "five times per week for a year" pattern. Basically, colleges may not greatly care to know whether a school operates on a semester or trimester or quinmester plan or how many modules add up to what. All that is requested here is a reasonably clear description of what the system is.

[20] Explanatory comments on the structure of the curriculum. Many colleges find information about the curriculum of an applicant's school useful, especially when the curriculum, or significant parts of it, depart from traditional patterns. For admissions purposes, a few selected notes on the way the curriculum is structured should be sufficient.

[21] Key to symbols, abbreviations, and course titles. Schools are urged to include among the materials in the transcript packet:

(a) A key to abbreviations, symbols, etc., if used to any considerable degree

(b) An indication of the major academic disciplines into which courses with non-traditional titles fall or on which they draw. (For example, "Man's Search for Freedom": Eng., SS., Fine Arts; or "Moral Responsibility in America": Eng., SS.)

Titles of many courses now are too long for entry on even a traditional transcript form, and when records are handled by computer abbreviations become a necessity. In addition, the meaning of many of the codes used by schools operating on modular or other unusual patterns to identify level or phase or sequence usually are not readily grasped by the outsider. An interpretive key is needed.

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Complaints from admission staff members that they are having difficulty in reading or understanding some transcript content are not veiled criticism of curriculum changes, but only pleas for help with the reading of unusual or unexplained names and phrases.

> *Special Note. The school and college staff members who drafted these Guidelines were persuaded that data on the percent of a school's graduates who continue their schooling are primarily indicators of the community's socio-economic level rather than significant information for interpreting an applicant's academic record. Hence, such information is not included in these Guidelines as a basic transcript item. At the same time, it was recognized that there will be circumstances wherein the "percent continuing" will have substantial meaning in interpreting a student's record and should, therefore, be entered in the transcript.*

CONTENT GUIDELINES: STUDENT'S ACADEMIC HISTORY

[22a] All courses undertaken, together with mark or other indication of progress in each. This Guideline; it is to be noted, calls for the listing of all courses, both passed and failed. A few schools report only those courses that were completed satisfactorily, omitting any that were not completed in an acceptable manner. While the reasons for such academic editing are understandable, in the long run the practice is likely to be a disservice to the student's best interests. Whether or not to enter dropped courses in the transcript is left to be decided by local policy.

[22b] Courses student has undertaken grouped by school year or other relevant time period. It is easier for a reviewer to see the individual's personal development if courses are presented in school-year groups. Furthermore, since most school records are set up on a year-by-year or other time-sequence basis, preparing transcripts from these permanent records--whether done by hand, by photocopier, or by computer--will proceed more accurately and easily if the same layout is followed in the transcript.

[23a] Credit value of each course completed, and

[23b] Total credits toward graduation accumulated as of the date of the transcript. The principal value of these two figures is the indication they give of the progress the student is making toward satisfying the school's graduation requirements.

[24] Identification of courses taken that are at a special level of difficulty. Colleges are interested mainly in those courses a student has taken that are distinctly more difficult than the general run of courses, so it can be expected that this Guideline will be used largely to indicate courses of that kind. Nevertheless, the Guideline has been phrased so as to encompass courses at lesser as well as greater degrees of academic difficulty.

[25] Identification of any courses a student has taken under out-of-the-ordinary circumstances. A school should indicate in some manner any courses or other learning experiences that were largely student-designed and student-directed as well as those that were undertaken under other non-customary conditions.

Examples of such courses are those a student might take at a local college while still in high school or at a university that offers special summer programs for high schoolers. Another example would be research work carried on by students

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in science courses under the joint supervision of high school and college teachers. Still another possibility would be supervised community service internships. Any learning experience of an independent or tutorial nature that is credited by the school should also be put in this category.

[26] Courses in progress at the time the transcript is dispatched. This is a reminder that current information may have to be added to the transcript manually if the transcript is prepared mainly by photographing a school's permanent record cards or getting a printout from a computer.

[27] Grade-point average and/or rank-in-class, if available. The comments made about Guideline 17 also apply here.

[28] Date of student's graduation, actual or anticipated.

[29] Date and grade at which student entered this school.

[30] Names and addresses of other secondary schools the student has attended, with dates and grades attended at those schools. In preparing a transcript, a school should include the record of any work the student may have done at other high schools and the names and addresses of those other schools, leaving it to the college to decide whether or not it wants or needs to obtain additional information from those other schools.

[31] Results on college-performance-related standardized tests, principally those taken in grades 11 and 12. The first part of this Guideline proposes that only those standardized test scores be put on a transcript that are judged to have substantial value in relation to probable performance in college. Each school will have to work up its own operating policy in this regard, drawing heavily on the experience and professional sensitivity of its college counselors.

The second part of the recommendation--that standardized test scores reported on the transcript be limited to those a student obtains in the 11th and 12th grades--is an effort to provide the college with test data that are basically current. This does not mean that results from earlier years will have no meaning for admissions purposes, but the closer the tests are to the decision-making point, the more meaning for that decision-making they presumably will have. As with the other part of this Guideline, a school's counselors should exercise their discretion.

This Guideline is not intended to provide, directly or by implication, any endorsement of specific tests. It states only that the test record on a transcript should consist mainly of scores from college-performance-related tests, and there are many of these.

> *Special Note. While this Guideline does not specifically rule out the inclusion of an intelligence quotient on the transcript, those drafting the Guidelines expressed little enthusiasm for that statistic as an essential item on a transcript. The well known limitations of so-called IQ tests were primarily responsible for this reaction; but, more important, it was agreed that other tests of general academic competence which most applicants will have taken tend to provide more dependable indications of future academic performance. The IQ score may be of some help in instances where other evidence of general academic ability may not be available or where there are major inconsistencies among other data.*

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[32] Special features of a student's program. This Guideline provides an opportunity to describe fully unusual features of an applicant's scholastic history that may illuminate other parts of his record or to detail parts of it for which there is no place in the remainder of the transcript. This section should be used only occasionally and selectively.

[33] Name, title, and phone number of school staff member to contact for other information about the student. What is requested here is the staff member with whom a college admissions office should get in touch for additional information about an applicant or to check on information already in hand. (The phone number is desirable because most contacts of this kind are made by that medium.) Presumably, in most high schools this staff member will be the school's college adviser or someone with similar responsibilities rather than the principal.

[34] Signature and title of certifying school official with school seal. While Guideline 14 asked that the name and title of the certifying school official be included in the general information provided about the school, this Guideline calls for an actual signature on the academic record itself. The signature of a responsible and authorized school official attests to the accuracy of the record.

Special Note. The absence of a Guideline proposing the inclusion in transcripts of a recommendation by the school for or against admission is not an oversight; it was omitted deliberately. While most printed transcript forms ask for a school recommendation, reactions against providing this kind of judgment are increasing among secondary school personnel. This is especially true on the part of school counselors who see the making of recommendations on admission as a violation of the confidentiality of the counselor-student relationship. Furthermore, a majority of the colleges questioned on the matter indicated that either they did not ask for such a recommendation or if it was not forthcoming made a decision without it, presumably at no expense to the applicant's chances for admission. Under these circumstances, it was decided that a school recommendation does not qualify as one of the minimally essential items in a transcript, and whether or not to include this kind of official endorsement or disapproval on its transcripts is a policy matter for individual schools to decide on.

■ CONTENT GUIDELINES: STUDENT'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

[35] Especially significant in-school and out-of-school achievement and honors. Whatever a school includes under this heading should have been carefully selected for its uniqueness or other interpretive values; for its truly out-of-the ordinary character. This section, too, should be used selectively and only occasionally.

[36] Comments by school personnel. The group drafting these Guidelines agreed that somewhere in the documents making up the transcript packet space should be provided for comments by informed school personnel, perhaps one person speaking for several, relating to personal qualities of an applicant that bear significantly on his admissibility. This is not a request for recommendations or other testimony for or against admission. (See "Special Note" under Guideline 34, above.)

Whether to propose free writing or the use of some kind of check list or inventory or both was considered at length. The conclusion was finally reached that

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space for some free writing should be provided, but that two conditions should be observed in making use of that space:

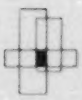
(a) Written comments should be limited so far as possible to observed events, existing conditions, and other non-judgmental evidence that relate closely to college admissions, and

(b) The absence of written comments on a transcript is not to be considered actually a negative comment.

The foregoing does not mean, however, that a school should abandon the use of an inventory or check list it has found to be informative in describing its students. At the same time, it should be noted that many personal inventories schools now use deal mainly with broad values that adults tend to prize, but which are, at least in the general terms in which they are phrased, only vaguely related to the prediction of academic success in college.

Schools are urged to submit written comments (other than those noted above) and check lists as separate documents rather than as an integral part of the applicant's official academic record for the reason that it is common collegiate practice to make the student's academic record a part of his permanent college file if he enrolls, but to make other disposition of personal evaluations. This differentiated treatment of documents obviously is easier if they are separate.

[37] Special problems or needs of a student, as related to admissibility. From time to time, applicants will have special problems to which the college should be alerted before it makes an admissions decision, especially if these problems might seriously interfere with the student's successful adjustment to college life. The means for sharing such information should be chosen with the best interests of the student and the college in mind.



Part III: Further Advice on Transcript Preparation

Many of the college admissions officers who contributed data basic to the formulation of the Guidelines also included some requests or suggestions which, although not reducible to Guideline form, deserve attention, especially by secondary school personnel. The topics that follow are those the drafting group decided to include in this report.

[A] Schools that assemble a number of documents to form a transcript packet are strongly urged to arrange and number these documents and to include a cover sheet that will be a table of contents. Many admissions people comment that it's not so much the unusual nature of some of the transcript materials that come to them these days that causes them problems as it is the unorganized nature of these bundles of papers in most instances. It does seem that initial responsibility for organizing transcript materials should be the school's. This means, among other things, providing a table of contents so that the reader of the packet will know what kinds of information he or she has in hand and so that controlling the multitude of sheets of paper will be possible as the packet moves from person to person.

This injunction may seem addressed mainly to schools that employ non-traditional transcript assemblies, but it should also be observed by schools that are using more or less established transcript materials but are supplementing them in various ways.

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- [B] Schools should give careful attention to the quality of the photocopied documents they include in their transcripts. Legibility of photocopies of records becomes steadily a matter of greater concern to admissions office staff members as the amount of materials they receive in that form increases.

- [C] Some materials coming from computers are also difficult to handle. Some printouts are done on very flimsy paper stock that is difficult to use in any case, and that does not stand up well under the repeated handling it gets in an admissions office. The quality of some computer printing that reaches colleges is also inferior.

  An individual school, especially in large school systems, may have little to say about the physical characteristics of the materials its computer service center turns out, but both school and computer personnel should do whatever can be done to improve or maintain the quality and durability of transcript materials.

- [D] The content and style of much of the written materials included in transcripts also need upgrading. Composing comments about students and their accomplishments is an extremely difficult and time-consuming task. Moreover, the teachers, counselors, and administrators who are called upon to do this kind of writing seldom have access to any systematic advice or other help in deciding what should be written about or how to do the writing most effectively. This is a professional need that deserves careful attention by individual schools, colleges, and professional associations.

- [E] Secondary school personnel should be aware of the trend among colleges and universities to accept, for decision-making purposes, information about their school records that is reported by students themselves. The two large testing corporations that administer entrance examinations are now requesting students to provide basic data regarding their achievements and future needs when filling out test registration materials. A student profile report is subsequently generated by the test corporation and forwarded to collegiate institutions at the request of the student.

  Schools are encouraged to take steps to prepare students to complete such self-reported information forms properly and accurately, especially those parts that deal with the student's academic record. The self-report forms now in use ask the student to report on such matters as his or her average or summary marks by subject area, estimated rank-in-class in deciles, etc., information which is normally available in school records. It is suggested, therefore, that schools in some systematic fashion make such information available to students prior to the time when they are asked to fill out a self-report form.

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